

Moshe went... He said to them, “I am a hundred and twenty years old today.” (31,1)

Parashas Vayeilech invariably falls before *Yom Kippur*. The *parsha* begins with Moshe *Rabbeinu* reflecting on his life, in preparation for taking leave of his nation. This perspective gives each and every one of us something to think about. Even the quintessential leader of the Jewish People prepared to meet his Maker. The confluence of the *Parsha* and the time of year gives us food for thought. I recently came across a lecture from **Horav Yoshiahu Yosef Pinto, Shlita**, which adds compelling insight and even trepidation to the thoughts ruminating through our minds at this time of year.

Moshe prayed fervently that he be allowed to enter *Eretz Yisrael*. The gates, however, were closed. Hashem was not going to rescind His decree. Rav Pinto observes that, when Moshe saw that his prayers had not achieved his desired efficacy, he asked Hashem immediately to have whatever allotted time he still had left in this world transferred to his disciple, Yehoshua. Let him have the extra time. This is an incredible statement. Apparently, Moshe felt that the last request he had of Hashem was to fulfill his dream of entering the Holy Land. If this was not acceptable, then he might as well transfer whatever time he had left to Yehoshua. He would put it to good use. Does one cavalierly give away his allotted time on this world? True, Yehoshua was Moshe's greatest disciple, but what about Moshe? Surely, he could have achieved more in the time that he had left remaining to him.

Rav Pinto cites the *tefillah* of *Rosh Hashanah* in which we mention that the *sifrei chaim* and *sifrei meisim* are open on this day. We can understand the significance of the Book of the Living being open and entries made into the book. What is gained by having the Book of the Dead open? Whoever has passed on is gone. Dead is dead. We have no second chances. We must say, explains Rav Pinto, that this is consistent with the *Midrash Koheles* which states that, at birth, it is decreed how long a person is destined to live. If he is worthy, he will complete his Heavenly allotted lifespan. If not – if he is doing poorly on this world – his lifespan will be shortened. This is the position held by Rabbi Akiva. The *Chachamim* disagree, saying that if he is worthy – years will be added to his lifespan. If he is unworthy – his lifespan will be decreased. In other words, Rabbi Akiva and the *Chachamim* are in dispute concerning whether he who is worthy will live longer than his allotted lifespan.

Hashem gives every person a certain amount of time to spend in the world. If he is unworthy, his lifespan is cut short, and the years that have been subtracted are transferred to another Jew who is worthy, but originally had not been assigned a long lifespan. Thus, the Book of the Dead is also opened, so that the righteous person whose time is up is to be “written off,” has the opportunity to accumulate some of the extra years that another Jew who has proven to be unworthy has lost. Therefore, we ask Hashem, *Zochreinu l'chaim, v'kosveinu b'sefer ha'chaim*. “Remember us for life; inscribe us for life.” We ask that the years allotted to us remain with us-- and not be

reassigned to anyone else.

Why did Kalev *ben* Yefuneh and Yehoshua *bin* Nun live long lives? When Hashem decreed to cut the lives of the other ten spies short, He took their lost years and supplemented the lives of Yehoshua and Kalev.

Likewise, Moshe *Rabbeinu* saw that Hashem did not rescind the decree against him. He was not going to enter *Eretz Yisrael*. He asked that whatever time he had left be transferred to Yehoshua, so that Moshe could partner with Yehoshua when the latter entered the Land. Thus, although Moshe himself was not going into the Land, a part of him would enter through the medium of Yehoshua.

At this time of the year, when we are in the midst of supplicating for another year of life, we should be cognitive of the meaning of “life.”